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Letter dated 29 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the sixty-first monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (see annex), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The present report covers the period from 24 September to 23 October 2018.

With regard to the outstanding issues related to the declaration of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic, I note with regret that the OPCW Technical Secretariat remains unable to resolve all of the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies, and therefore cannot fully verify that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete. In this context, I welcome the fact that the Director-General has conveyed to the Syrian authorities the importance of resolving the outstanding issues on an expedited basis.

The OPCW fact-finding mission is continuing its work to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, including with regard to the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Duma on 7 April 2018. I look forward to the issuance of its final report on this matter in due course. I further note the continuing efforts by the fact-finding mission during the current reporting period to gather and analyse information, and to conduct interviews, relating to five other alleged incidents.

In this regard, I recall that any further possible use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic would be wholly unacceptable, and that it is therefore imperative that no impunity for those acts be permitted by the international community.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 24 September to 23 October 2018, as well as the reporting requirements in Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Fernando **Arias**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the sixty-first monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 September 2018 to 23 October 2018.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) As stated in previous reports, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) On 17 October 2018, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its fifty-ninth monthly report (EC-90/P/NAT.1, dated 17 October 2018) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. During the reporting period, the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) continued its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with paragraph 3 of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

9. As stated in previous reports, on 10 July 2018 the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic with responses to the questions attached to the Director-General's letter to the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, Dr Faisal Mekdad, dated 10 April 2018. These questions pertained to the chemical weapons-related activities conducted at the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC). The DAT's analysis indicated that the information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic in its responses had been previously conveyed to the Secretariat.

10. In a letter to Deputy Minister Mekdad dated 28 September 2018, the Director-General shared the Secretariat's assessment of the information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic on 10 July 2018, and emphasised the importance of resolving the outstanding issues on an expedited basis. Furthermore, the Director-General invited the Syrian Arab Republic to continue working to clarify all gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies identified in its declaration and subsequent submissions, and reiterated the continuing support of the Secretariat for the Syrian authorities' efforts to fully implement their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention") and relevant decisions of the OPCW's policy-making organs.

11. The Director-General provided an update on the recent activities of the DAT in a Note entitled "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" (EC-89/HP/DG.2, dated 1 October 2018). In this Note, the Director-General concluded that the Secretariat remains unable to resolve all of the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration, and therefore cannot fully verify that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention and Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1.

12. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat continues the planning of the inspections at the sites identified by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in its third and fourth reports. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is preparing for the next inspections to be conducted at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

13. The United Nations Office for Project Services continues to provide support to the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement.

14. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

15. As previously reported, the Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the OPCW FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions to this fund stood at EUR 17.3 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

16. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continues to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

17. On 6 July, the Secretariat issued a Note entitled "Interim Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incident of Alleged Use of Toxic Chemicals as a Weapon in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018" (S/1645/2018, dated 6 July 2018 and Corr.1, dated 10 July 2018). On 7 August, the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic that provided comments on the interim report. The FFM continues to collect and analyse information with regard to the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Douma and will provide a final report on its findings in due course.

18. At the end of September 2018, the FFM deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic to gather further information and conduct interviews regarding five reported incidents currently under investigation: two incidents in Kharbit Masasnah on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017; one incident in Qalib Al-Thawr, Al-Salamiyah on 9 August 2017; one incident in Yarmouk, Damascus on 22 October 2017; and one in Al-Balil, Souran on 8 November 2017. The FFM is currently analysing the information collected with regard to these incidents.

19. The Secretariat provided an update on the recent activities of the FFM in a Note entitled "Summary Update of the Activities Carried out by the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (S/1677/2018, dated 10 October 2018). The Note summarises the work done by the FFM since July 2018 and the next steps in its work.

Activities related to the use of chemical weapons in Syria carried out by the Secretariat with respect to decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session

20. The Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter "the Conference") at its Fourth Special Session adopted a decision entitled "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018) which, inter alia, addressed the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In paragraph 8 of the decision, the Conference encouraged the Director-General to continue to provide regular

updates on the FFM's operations, taking into account the need to protect the security and safety of Secretariat personnel.

21. In paragraph 10 of the decision, the Conference decided that the Secretariat shall put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM in Syria determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism has not issued a report. The Conference further decided, in paragraph 12, that the Secretariat shall preserve and provide information to the investigation mechanism established by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 71/248 (2016), as well as to any relevant investigatory entities established under the auspices of the United Nations.

22. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of the decision, a progress report on the implementation of C-SS-4/DEC.3 entitled "Progress in the Implementation of Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 on Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" (EC-89/DG.29, dated 4 October 2018) was submitted to the Council at its Eighty-Ninth Session.

Conclusion

23. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM; the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues; annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed; and implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3.